MONTEREY NEWS

June 2009
VOLUME XXXIX · Number 6

Annual Town Meeting

The Town of Monterey's 2009 Annual Town Meeting was called to order at 9 a.m. on Saturday, May 2, with the customary special meeting initiating the proceedings. There were two articles to take care of in the special meeting: Article 1, to transfer $14,770 from Free Cash into the Salt Shed Design and Borings Account, passed, as did Article 2, to transfer $127,882 from Free Cash in to the Sand and Snow Account (more about the cost of sand and salt later in this article).

The Annual Town Meeting began at 9:30 a.m. with our trusty moderator, Mark Makuc, wielding the gavel and bringing the meeting to order. Article 1, to vote on the election of town officers, and Article 2, to hear and act on the reports of all Officers, Committees and Agents of the Town, passed without discussion, as did Article 3, which set yearly salaries for Select Board members at $4,300; Assessors Chair, 2nd, and 3rd at $4,000; and Board of Health Chair, 2nd, and 3rd at $500.

Herons near Monterey-Otis line (photo Wayne Dunlop).

The School Budget

Articles 4 and 5 addressed the familiar, but always complex, matter of the apportionment and approval for the Southern Berkshire Regional School District (SBRSD) budget. Over the past several years there has been discord among the member towns of the district regarding how much of the budget each town is responsible for and all the factors that go into that computation. In 2001 the SBRSD towns voted to use an alternative assessment—a per pupil method—to calculate each member town's share of the district's total operating and transportation budget. A few years later, Sheffield, the town with the majority of the students in the district, complained that the method was unfair and burdened their town unduly when other towns had higher property values and real estate assessments. Sheffield favored using what is known as the Statutory Method, which was wealth-based and calculated a town's share of the school budget based on property valuations and incomes.

Things came to a head over the last two years when Sheffield realized that part of the five-town district agreement was that all the towns in the SBRSD had to agree on the apportionment method or, according to the agreement, it was back to the drawing board. That's when Sheffield really dug in its heels regarding the budget apportionment, and some of the other district towns decided to sue Sheffield. Appeals were made to the Department of Education and the following compromises were suggested: the towns would use the Alternative Method approved by all five towns in 2001, and then multiply that number by 50 percent. Then the district treasurer would calculate each member town's share using the Statutory Method and multiply that by 50 percent. The final computation for the Fiscal Year 2010 assessment adds the Alternative Method portion to the Statutory Method portion for the final budget contribution for each town. Article 4 was to see if Monterey would approve this plan.

Select Board Chair Wayne Burkhart reported that the five towns have come together very constructively to work out their differences. He said that two years are left in the old district agreement (Alternative Method) and that the Statutory Method was a relief for hard-hit towns in the district. Further, this year's formula was halfway between the old formula and a new one, and next year the district will be three-fourths of the way to using the Statutory Formula. Burkhart emphasized that the school district is a "commonweal" in supporting the current combined assessment formula.

Monterey citizen Ozzie Dugan differed, stating, "The per pupil cost is the way it should be. Sheffield did something illegal and they got away with it. I think we should stand up and fight." To which Select Board member Jon Sylbert responded, "If one town in the district votes down the agreement, then the Statutory Method would be implemented by the state." Sylbert also explained that there is a 5 percent difference between the Statutory Method (based on property valuations) and the Alternative Method (per pupil). He went on to point out bright spots in the district over the past year, specifically noting that the School Committee is now elected (and no longer appointed by member towns' Select Boards). Sylbert informed the citizens that if Monterey agrees to this apportionment method calculation, then New Marlborough would drop its lawsuit against Sheffield. He ended by saying, "We need to be together on this so that we can deal with future budget constraints—because they are definitely out there."

Muriel Lazzarini summed up her feelings by saying, "I support an elected School Committee. If I were voting with my emotions I would vote "No," but I think we should support our elected School Committee. So I'm going to vote to pass this."

Article 4 passed with a 76-4 vote, and Article 5, to see if the Town would vote to allocate the sum of its required contribution ($921,212), was approved too.

The Town Budget

Article 6 asked for approval of the line items that comprise the various elements of the Town's budget. Moderator Mark Makuc instructed voters to call out a "hold" as he read through the line items if they wanted to discuss an item in the budget. At the end of the reading he would go back to whatever lines had a hold on them.

Cost of Living Raises

Dean Amidon called out a hold on three line items involving employees of the Town who were not taking the 3 percent across-the-board cost of living raise. The first employee, Town Accountant Barbara Gauthier, said "No, thanks," and that she liked her job just as it is. The next employee was Tax Collector Mari Enoch, and Amidon pointed out that her job has increased since taxes are now collected four times per year. The amendment for a 3 percent raise for the position passed. Amidon, a longtime Republican, joked, "People will start thinking I'm a Democrat!" Amidon also advocated for the position of Town Clerk to have the 3 percent raise, and that also passed.

Town Clerk Expenses

Outgoing Town Clerk Barbara Swann put a hold on the Town Clerk expenses line item and proposed an amendment to raise the appropriation by $1,000 to level-fund the account. Swann pointed out that this money is the amount paid to have a dedicated phone line in the Town Clerk's house that is directly connected to the state database and is used to transmit vital documents; it is also how citizens may reach the Town Clerk outside of office hours.

Select Board member Jon Sylbert took the floor, stating, "There is an office at the Town Hall for the Town Clerk to do the job at the Town Hall, phones included. It is fully technologically funded and if the new Town Clerk finds the need to work at home we will need to look at that." Dean Amidon responded that the owner of the Monterey General Store, Kenn Basler, said that folks come into the store looking for a Fishing License, and they are always able to get Barbara Swann on her line at home, which is very convenient. Richard Tryon added his support to level-fund the account, adding, "Many people who need the Town Clerk do not live here. It

(continued on p. 4)

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LakeFest 2009 Poster Photo Contest Winner

Wait until you see this winter sunset in all its surreal shades of pink and purple! Perfect for our Friends of Lake Garfield LakeFest 2009 poster. It's a dazzler. Posters will be on sale during LakeFest and in the General Store for $20. You say you're a dues-paying member of the Friends of Lake Garfield?—for you, it's only $15.

David Schwartz, a neuroscientist and this year's winning photographer, is never far from his camera. Good thing, for when an ordinary sunset suddenly turned extraordinary, David was ready on the scene. He happens to be an expert with Photoshop—you know, that software that lets you do all kinds of tricks and special effects with photos—but there's no Photoshop here. When you see the color photo, the colors you'll see are the colors David saw—special, with no special effects.

Visit FLG on our website, LakeGarfield.org. You might even see this photo there.

— Hy Rosen

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makes no sense to staff the office more. Let's put in the extra $1,000 so that we have the money to install a phone line to the Town Clerk's house.

Again Selectman Sylbert weighed in: "You can call the Town Clerk at home without having a $1,000 Centrex line. Three boards have reviewed the budget and arrived at these recommendations, and I think we should support them." To which Barbara Swann countered, "The Town Clerk is the only named office in the phone book. It is much more efficient for the Town Clerk to take calls, such as after-hours calls from California, on the spot." Swann added, "It is perfectly legal for the Town Clerk to operate from home, and the office at the Town Hall is a constrained space, to put it mildly." Sylbert rose to his feet once more: "The budget committee surveyed comparable towns like Egremont, New Marlborough, and Alford (Otis is a 33 percent larger town) and this is what we felt was an appropriate amount of funding. I agree that we have a great Town Clerk and we get great service."

Jules Dahlman stated that he felt money for telecommunications should not be cut and attempted to make an amendment to increase the budget for the Town Clerk by $3,000 in order for the Town Clerk to have an assistant. Mary Ellen Brown said, "We need to get over the idea that we need access to the Town Clerk 24/7. I think as citizens we can get it together to do things during business hours. Also, most of our positions, Assessor, etc., do not have assistants—why should the Town Clerk?" The amendment for a $3,000 increase in funding for the Town Clerk expenses account failed, but the proposal to raise the appropriation by $1000 to level-fund the account passed, 34 in favor and 30 against.

Then it was on to the discussion regarding the proposed reduction in the Street Listing/Census account from $7,867 last year to $2,000 for 2010. Town Clerk Barbara Swann stated that the last time funding for that account was at $2,000 was 1995. She recommended restoring the funding to last year's amount and also wanted to amend the item to rename it Board of Registrars Clerk. Selectman Sylbert pointed out that the only other town in Southern Berkshire County with a separate Board of Registrars Clerk was Sheffield. "We felt it was an inappropriate addition, and it would mean adding $8000 to the budget. In all other towns this is part of the Town Clerk's job. We made sure that everybody's salary in this town is in line with what other towns pay. Our Finance Committee performed due diligence, and

we recognize that everyone's position is important." In an attempt to clarify, Stan Ross stated, "You are cutting the Town Clerk's salary by $5,000," to which Barbara Swann added, "Often a new Town Clerk will settle for less and then regret it."

Town Counsel Jeremiah Pollard stated, "The Clerk of the Board of Registrars is the Town Clerk, and I disagree with the statement that it is a separate office." Citizen Lisa Smyle supported the existing appropriation stating, "The various committees have performed due diligence and all these numbers are in line with the surrounding towns. Plus we need to be prepared for coming budget constraints." The amendment to fund at last year's amount of $7,867 and to rename the position The Clerk of the Board of Registrars failed.

Fulltime Police Officer

Next on the line item holds was a question from Leroy Thorpe to Police Chief Gareth Backahus regarding the funding of a fulltime police officer: "The last two years we voted money for a fulltime police officer, and we still don't have one. Where did that money go?" Chief Backhaus responded that the money has been used to pay part-time police officers overtime: "Every time we hire someone and we pay to train them, they go to work for another town. So we are using that money to pay the part-time people who are filling in." Finance Committee member Dan Moriarty added, "We have worked hard to find the right personality to do the job, and that's hard in a town like ours." There was laughter all around at that statement. Thorpe pressed his case: "I want to amend the line item so it states that the money is only to be

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Bill Bell (l), Dick Tryon, and Mort Sternberg at Memorial Day observance at Veterans Memorial Park (photo Linda Thorpe).

used for a fulltime police officer." To which Moriarty countered, "If we find a successful candidate in the future and then we don't have the money, that makes no sense." The proposed amendment to change the Police Officer line item to "fulltime" failed.

Salt and Sand

Next up for discussion was the Salt and Sand budget item. Selectman Jon Sylbert provided a thumbnail sketch of the situation: "We had lots of ice storms this winter. In Monterey we often go over budget on this item; however this year there is a $133,000 overrun. That really eats into our budget. We did comparisons with the other towns, and everyone is paying more for salt and sand." Sylbert went on to explain that Monterey pays more to plow and sand its roads than does Great Barrington, because Great Barrington has more state roads than Monterey, and the state pays for winter maintenance on those roads. Sylbert added that the cost of salt and sand in 2002 was $49 per ton, and the price in 2008 was $89 per ton. Town Accountant Barbara Gauthier proposed an amendment to increase the Salt and Sand budget from $100,000 to $150,000, which passed.

A Dog Park?

Monterey citizen Charles Ferris put a hold on the line item for the budget for the Park Commission. Ferris proposed that a dog park be constructed on the Edith Wilson property, using Berkshire Fence to construct the fenced-in area. He had a quote of $16.60 per foot to install the fence and mentioned that there is already fencing in place that could be used. He conjectured about the need to consult the Animal Control Officer regarding the rules for the dog park, the need for occasional mowing of the property, and also the need to provide plastic bags for pet owners to pick up dog wastes. Ferris proposed increasing the Park Commission budget by $8,500 for the dog park.

Park Commission member Bridget Krans stated that Ferris's calculations did not include weekly garbage removal and the real cost of additional mowing, and had also not taken liability issues into consideration. Mary Ellen Brown cut through the discussion with a motion to pass over the amendment: "There is a way to get things on the warrant. You present ideas to the Select Board. You discuss them with the Park Commission. Town Counsel considers the legal ramifications. The Finance Committee looks it over. It is inappropriate to present an amendment like this at Town Meeting without first going through the proper channels." Brown's view was upheld and the amendment failed.

Barbara Swann Recognized

In a lighter moment, at the end of the discussion about line items, Dean Amidon was recognized and took the floor: "I want to go on record as recognizing Barbara

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Swann for her amazing twenty-two years of service to this town, and I want to give her a big hug." Which he did to the applause of all the citizens.

Other Articles

After the budget article was approved, an article to amend Monterey's personnel policies passed. The article outlines the amount of vacation to which each town employee is entitled. After one year of employment town employees receive one week paid vacation; two weeks vacation after two consecutive years of employment; three weeks vacation after five consecutive years of employment; and four weeks vacation after eleven years of service.

The last article with any controversy was an article to see if the Town would amend it's bylaws to allow for a member of a town board to miss a single session of an adjudicatory hearing, including but not limited to hearings conducted by the Board of Selectmen, Conservation Commission, Planning Board, and Zoning Board of Appeals, without disqualification from voting on the matter. Select Board Chair Wayne Burkhart described the proposal as a "safety valve for boards, some of which have a hard time getting a quorum for all of their meetings." Bob Lazzarini disagreed: "This bylaw is too strong and allows a member of a board who has not seen evidence to vote." Lazzarini went on, "It actually 'dumbs down' the ability to vote, and allows for multiple people to exercise that right at the same time. We should table this idea to create a better bylaw than this." Citizens voted 36 to 3 in favor of tabling the proposal.

And by this time everyone had had about enough.

— Maggie Leonard

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The Town

Meeting with Kerry's Staff

On Friday, May 15, delegates from Senator John Kerry's office met at the Monterey Town Hall with officials and interested citizens from Monterey and twenty-one other towns. Meghan Leahy, policy advisor; Greg Stewart, assistant to the Senator; and Stephen Meuniere were present from Kerry's staff, along with a representative from Kerry's office. The meeting addressed local and state budget concerns. Of particular interest to residents of Monterey and other hill towns were the issues of high-speed Internet access and cell phone reception so that home-based business can thrive in these areas. Dan Moriarty and Pete Hagen attended the meeting to address the issues of Lake Buel flooding and to inquire about possible funding for flood remediation.

Commonwealth Forums

At 6:30 p.m. on Thursday, May 14, at the Monterey Firehouse, Leslie Kirwan, executive director of finances for Governor Deval Patrick, Bob Nunes, and Representative Smitty Pignatelli joined Jon Sylbert and Wayne Burkhart from the Monterey Select Board, along with a group of people from four or five surrounding towns. The discussion centered on how to handle the 3.4 billion state revenue loss for the 2008–2009 fiscal year, with the revenue loss in 2010 projected to be 5.4 million. This loss stems, in a large part, from loss of tax revenue, snow removal costs, and safety net costs.

The forum was part of a thirty-six-town tour, during which state government officials are looking for feedback on how to handle the budget shortfall. Governor Patrick favors taxing items such as candy, soda, meals, hotels, and gas instead of increasing property taxes, corporate taxes, general sales taxes, and income taxes.

The governor also advocates transportation reform by "ending the Big Dig culture," abolishing the Massachusetts Turnpike Authority, merging all transportation agencies, and reforming pension policy. He also wants to restore public trust by emphasizing ethics and lobbying reforms.

Jon Sylbert wanted to go on record saying he appreciated that one of the forums was held in Monterey.

Police Blotter

- Motorcycle came in from Great Barrington, no license, DUI.
- Report of intruder; homeowner called next morning, but no evidence was found; locks were changed.
- Four more calls about complaints against National Grid and Verizon for noise from residents on Art School Road, even

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Scenes from the Monterey Memorial Day Parade photo Hannah Jacobson-Hardy).

though they have been informed it is not a police matter.
- False alarms, Mt. Hunger Road, Main Road (2), and Town Hall.
- Abandoned 911 calls on Main Road and Gould Road (3).
- Motor vehicle accident on Pixley Road.
- Mutual aid call to Great Barrington.
- Two unlicensed driver complaints.
- Moving van left ramp on Sandisfield Road (no room in truck). When driver returned for it, ramp had disappeared.
- Investigated report of marijuana plants in vacated house on Beartown Mountain Road. Drug task force called in when it proved to be a large operation.
- Sudden death on Mt. Laurel Way.
- Well-being check on Bidwell Road.
- Submerged dock reported on Lime Rock Lane; letter sent to owner.
- Pole fire on Elephant Rock Road.
- Tree down, Sandisfield Road.
- Medical call, Gould Farm.
- Lockout, Gould Road.
- Assisted Fire Department with several medical calls.

Highway Matters

Hillel Maximon attended a Select Board meeting to question why his end of Beartown Mountain Road had not been cleaned up yet after the December ice storm, and he produced photos that showed its condition. He said that his taxes have gone up 12 percent, and he feels he is getting fewer services. The Board registered his complaints and produced a schedule of road clearing that Director of Operations Maynard Forbes had prepared showing that Beartown Mountain Road is on the list. (The photos, perhaps because of their quality, did not appear to show the degree of devastation that was claimed.) In discussing Mr. Maximon's complaints about snowplowing (he claims that his section of the road gets a lot more snow than surrounding areas), Forbes pointed out that Beartown is plowed first during the week, because of school bus use, and tends to be further down the list on weekends.

Animal Control Officer

In a lengthy meeting of the Select Board, the Board of Health, the Police Chief, and the Animal Control Officer (ACO), the ACO's duties and performance were discussed . Police Chief Backhaus said that because ACO Nora Hayes's pages often go answered, his department winds up dealing with most of the animal control calls, and he questioned whether a separate ACO is needed. He said that when the ACO was hired, he felt the Police Department should be involved only when necessary, but that now they are responding more than the ACO.

Hayes said that she has been dealing very well with the issues she's aware of and pointed out that it is a part-time position. She suggested that Chief Backhaus call her at work in Sheffield whenever

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the Police Department receives a page; however, Chief Backhaus did not think that was his job.

During the meeting, the Interdepartmental Secretary placed a loose dog complaint with the dispatch company to see what the response would be. Although the Police Department received a page, the ACO did not. Upon investigation, Chief Backhaus discovered that the dispatch company had been notified that the ACO was not to be paged for loose dogs, which was why Hayes had not been receiving the pages. Who had made those changes was not ascertained, and Chief Backhaus made it clear to the dispatch company that both the Police Department and the ACO should be paged for every animal control issue.

Nora Hayes again requested a location in Monterey to keep stray dogs rather than having to send them to a Great Barrington veterinarian. The Board of Health said that Hayes was doing an adequate job from their perspective.

The Select Board informed Hayes of complaints made by the Cemetery Committee about large amounts of dog waste they have had to clean up in the Chestnut Hill cemetery. Since the only licensed dogs on Chestnut Hill belong to Hayes, who lives next door to the cemetery, her dogs were assumed to be causing the problem. Hayes said she said she was not aware of the situation, although she did confirm there was no fence between her yard and the cemetery. She promised to remedy the situation.

West Road Complaints

The Select Board received an anonymous complaint about the amount of truck traffic and the amount of gravel being removed from the property at the top of West Road that appears to be being used for a commercial business. The Board wrote a letter to the property owner saying that if more that 500 cubic yards of earth is removed per year, an earth removal permit is required. The complainant said that S. Tucker's deed states he is not allowed to operate a commercial business.

Chris Blair of the Conservation Commission stated that the Commission had not granted permission for removing gravel, or for any other actions regarding a 40B. The Select Board also commented that they had in no way endorsed Tucker's project during his initial meeting with them.

Blair also said that the Conservation Commission has started to review the property but hasn't ascertained any wetlands violations. He suggested that any pollution issues would come under the federal government's jurisdiction.

Food Pantry in Town

Bob and Muriel Lazzarini have been meeting with the Select Board regarding establishing a food pantry in Monterey. They have documented around twenty families that could use the assistance and pointed out that the need is only going to get worse. After investigating ten sites, they suggested the basement of the Town Hall was the most logical place.

The Select Board agreed that a food pantry in town is a good idea. However, after checking with Town Counsel and the Police and Fire Departments, the Board finally decided that because of security, liability, and use issues, it would not be wise to commit the Town Hall basement to that use, and that the church basement might be a better choice. The Lazzarinis left to regroup and to consider other alternatives.

Zoning Bylaws

Building Commissioner Donald Torrico asked that the building permit section of the zoning bylaws needed to be revised, because there are still a lot of mistakes, even though he had itemized them in writing to the Planning Board two years ago. He agreed to resend the letter to the Planning Board and to copy the Select Board. Torrico also suggested that the sign bylaw be revised so there is one fee for everyone.

LakeFest Set for August 15

LakeFest will be on Saturday, August 15. If you want to contribute to the fireworks budget, check the Friends of Lake Garfield website for the fireworks fund.

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The summer meetings of the Friends of Lake Garfield will be at 9:30 a.m. on June 6, July 4, and August 1 at the Firehouse.

Auction of Town-Owned Land

On June 6, at 11:00 a.m. at the Firehouse, an auction will be held to sell land that was taken by the town for long-unpaid taxes; the hope is to get some town-owned property back on the tax rolls.

This and That

Plans are in effect to establish a desirable lake level for Lake Buel and to have a lake level indicator placed near the boat ramp so that anyone can reference it. The Board of Health reminded the Hebert's Cove Association that they need to perform regular inspections of the shared septic system.

Scott Jenssen was appointed as Chairperson for the Select Board on May 4, 2009.

The Town Meeting was discussed, and the Board was complimented for a job well done. Melissa Noe said that since April 2006, she has had 35 requests for dog licenses and 47 requests for fishing and hunting licenses. The Board agreed to speak with L. Thorpe, Town Clerk about having Melissa set up to sell these licenses, as well as the Town Clerk (which is a part time position).

— Sue Protheroe

friends of the monterey library

Let's Be Friends

Friends of the Monterey Library is now actively seeking membership. Applications can be downloaded at www.montereyma.gov. Click on "Town Government and Departments" and then on "Monterey Library." Or, the applications can be picked up at the library, Town Hall, or the General Store. Completed applications should be dropped off at the library or mailed to Monterey Library, PO Box 172, Monterey MA 01245.

There is no set fee for membership. All contributions will be gratefully accepted. Please be generous, especially because we are applying for a grant to be used to purchase children's books that will match $2 for every $1 donated. Membership fees generally will be used to support and enhance all the services and programs of the library. We welcome your input at the next Friends meeting, Saturday, June 20, at 6:30 p.m. at the library.

We thank Friends director, Julie Shapiro for the striking logo heading this notice. Thanks also to the other directors for their efforts in organizing the Friends: Ann Marie Enoch, Kent Godfrey, Ellen Grenadier, Frances Huberman, and Colleen Johnson.

Thanks also to Myrna Rosen for organizing our first fundraiser, a Monterey garden tour. More next month about the garden tour.

Friends of the Monterey Library owes its existence to the support and cooperation of the Library Trustees and the dedication, perseverance, and hard work of Library Director Mark Makuc. Thank you.

— Lonnie Solomon, Friends Director.

Reading Group Organizing

An organizational meeting for an adult reading group will be held on Monday, June 29, at 7 p.m. in the Monterey Library. Anyone interested is encouraged to attend to help get the group off the ground.

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Lake Garfield Beach & Boats

The Town Beach at Lake Garfield will open on June 15. All lake-owned boats should be in the lake before that date.

Boat launching will be the same as last year, which worked out well. If there are any questions call Dean Amidon, Deputy Harbormaster for Lake Garfield, or call the Monterey Chief of Police who is the Harbormaster for the Town.

We hope you have a safe and enjoyable summer.

— Dean P. Amidon,
Deputy Harbormaster

Monterey School News

The Monterey School is seeking students for early Kindergarten and Kindergarten for the next school year. Five children are registered so far, and more are needed and will be welcomed. The child must turn five years old by December 31, 2009.

"Stories That Endure" at June 17 Community Dinner

At the May Community Potluck, local historian and author Bernard Drew regaled us with stories of how he came to write his latest book, *Gibson's Grove and Turner's Landing: Lake Buel's Century as a Summer Resort*. Many thanks to Bernie for a lovely evening with local historical significance.

In an unusual turn of events, we ARE having an early summer Potluck Dinner on June 17. Gerald and Loretta Hausman, authors of over fifty books, who started out their careers right here in Monterey on New Marlboro Road, will be back in town and will present "Stories That Endure through Time"—true stories gathered all over the U.S, the Caribbean, and Europe. The tradition of storytelling is as old as humankind, and Gerry has made a career of telling stories. Their newest book is *The Image Taker: The Selected Stories and Photographs of Edward S. Curtis*.

The final Monterey Community Potluck Dinner of the season will be held on Wednesday, June 17, at 6 p.m. in the Fellowship Hall of the Monterey Meetinghouse. Please bring a dish to share with a serving utensil and a place setting and silverware for yourself. All are welcome.

— Kyle Pierce

Financial Workshop with Terry Webb & Rep. Pignatelli

On Thursday, June 11, at 7:00 p.m., the Monterey General Store will present the third and final workshop focusing on what's happening in the financial world, how it affects us directly, and what we can do about it.

If you haven't attended one of the previous workshops, let me bring you up to date. During the last couple of months I have heard the frustration of so many people coming into the store who are feeling overwhelmed by forces beyond their control. I asked Terry Webb, Senior Vice President of RBC Wealth Management, if he could develop a format that would get accurate and thoughtful information out to people. We decide an old-fashioned, give-and-take presentation would be most effective. To this end Terry has conducted two evening events with great turnout and participation. This third in the series of workshop will be on "Understanding our economy and opportunities under the American Financial Recovery Act." Smitty Pignatelli, our State Representative, will attend and bring us up to date on what is happening in Massachusetts and especially the Berkshire's.

— Kenn Basler

ॐ

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Monterey School Poetry Recital June 22

Please join the children of the Monterey School on the evening of Monday, June 22, for their annual Poetry Recital and Dramatization: Early Childhood Favorites. This program will be presented at 7:00 p.m. in the Monterey Meetinghouse. Once again, our beloved Mrs. Andersen and Mrs. Twing have taught our students poetry by such poets as Lear, A. A. Milne, Longfellow, Frost, and Ogden Nash. If you've been to any of the school's poetry recitals in the past, you know that they are always well performed, with fantastic costumes and props. So come because you enjoy poetry. Come because you memorized "The Owl and the Pussycat" when you were young. Come because you support our treasured Monterey School and its children. Mostly, come because the enthusiasm with which these five-, six-, and seven-year-olds recite classic poetry will put a smile on your face and brighten your week.

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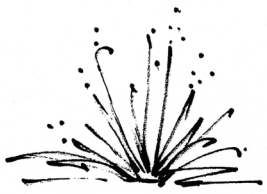

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Monterey Library Notes

We take this time of year to remind everyone of our cultural attractions passes. We have added a new pass this year, to Chesterwood (thanks to Janet Cathcart!). We also have passes to the Bidwell House, Norman Rockwell Museum, Hancock Shaker Village, Mass MOCA, the Mount, Ventfort Hall, the Berkshire Museum, the Massachusetts Park System (go up the new road to Mount Greylock and park for free), and even a discount pass for Mystic Aquarium. All the passes have different benefits and admission rules, but you borrow them like a book and get in free or for a discount. They are very popular and cannot be reserved from your CWMARS account. Call the library (528-3795) or stop in to check for availability.

Our summer reading program will start in July. On Saturday mornings in July and through the third weekend in August, we have programming suitable for younger children at the library at 10:30 a.m. for about 45 minutes. You can bring your grandchildren over and go have a cup of coffee at the General Store. Our first program is on July 11 and will be the ever-popular magician, Professor Readalot! We also will have worksheets and reading logs so that kids can keep track of their summer reading—the theme of the state program this year is Starship Adventures! Details will follow in the next *Monterey News* or you can check the library's website, which is accessed through the Town of Monterey website, www.montereyma.gov.

Don't forget to mark your calendars on July 25 for the annual library book sale. We always have more than enough books to go around, so please plan to stop by and see how many interest you. If you are interested in donating books please go to the library website and look at the policies approved by the Trustees for donations.

Finally, we had such success last year with poetry sharing that we are scheduling Monday night, July 13, at 7 p.m. for another chance for Monterey poets of all ages (this is a family friendly event) to share their work!

— Mark Makuc, Library Director

Call for Artists!

The Otis Cultural Council seeks artists and craftspeople for the Otis Arts Festival, Saturday, July 25, at Farmington River Elementary School, Otis. Entry fee is $15. Applications are available online at www.townofotisma.com/culturalcouncil, or at the Otis Town Hall bulletin board.

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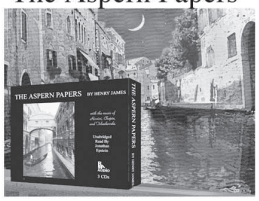
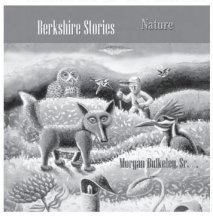
Audio for the Refined Ear

Berkshire Media Artists

The Aspern Papers

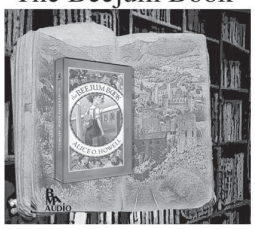


Berkshire Stories

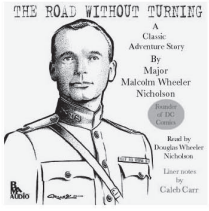


Poets of Nature

The Beejum Book



The Birth of Pulp



"Epstein does an outstanding job."
– AudioFile

"A Great Listen."
– The Berkshire Eagle

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Bidwell House Events

The Bidwell House Museum at 100 Art School Road in Monterey opened for the season on Memorial Day, May 25. The colonial history museum is located in a 1750 classic Georgian saltbox on two hundred acres and is open to the public for tours from 11 a.m. to 4 p.m., Thursday through Monday, throughout the summer and early fall until Columbus Day.

A program of weekend events is available at the Monterey General Store. On June 6, at 10 a.m., the Bidwell House welcomes Lynda Meyer of Lynda's Antique Clothing Loft in Adams, Massachusetts. The attire of three generations of Bidwells will be presented for the first time in the museum's history. Utilizing prints and period clothing, Meyer will describe the clothing of Reverend Adonijah Bidwell, using the account of the inventory of his belongings made on his death in 1784.

Reverend Adonijah's will is a second document that reveals the importance of textiles to this father of four who married three times in succession. His first wife, Theodosia, arrived from Hartford in 1752; upon her death, he married Jemima Devotion, the mother of his children. When his eldest son, Adonijah the Younger, was 11, his mother died and the Reverend married a third time, to Ruth Kent. A very rare hand-tinted book of women's fashions of the late colonial and early federal period will be on display for this occasion. The book was found in the library of the founders of the Bidwell House Museum, the inveterate collectors Jack Hargis and David Brush. They were fashion designers from New York City who arrived in Monterey in 1960 and began a twenty-five-year restoration and preservation project that is now a gem of the Berkshires. Other handmade eighteenth-century items of women's wear will be available for viewing for the first time at the Bidwell House.

Lynda Meyer has been a resource for historical societies and museums in the Berkshires and Connecticut for twenty-five years. She has lectured at the Clark, Naumkeag, The Mount, Berkshire Museum, libraries in North Adams and Adams, and at Williams College and Bennington College. When she visited the Bidwell House, she said, "I was taken by the wonderfulness of the authenticity of what I saw in each room. The house in its setting on the land is incomparable." The house is located on the old Boston Post Road to Albany and marks the demographic center of Tyringham Township, settled in 1739.

Guests are invited to bring their own antique clothing to the lecture, and Myer has agreed to do verbal appraisals of these items.

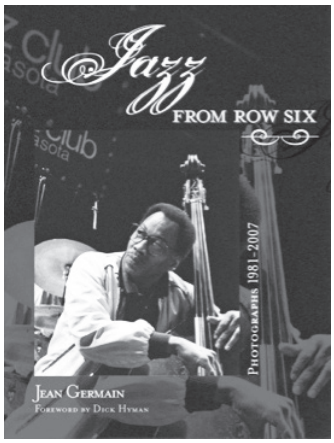
A picnic lunch will be available after the lecture and will be included in the cost of $10 per person for members and $15 for nonmembers. For further information, call the Bidwell House at 413-528-6888 and visit the web site www.bidwellhouse-museum.org.

MONTEREY UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST

Sunday Service · 10 a.m.
in the Meeting House

Elizabeth Goodman, Pastor

For Information and Assistance:
528-5850



Jean Germain Wins 2009 Indie Book Award

Jean Germain, a Monterey resident for forty-five years, is an award winning photographer and now adds author of *Jazz From Row Six* to her resume. Jean's book has just received a Gold Medal in the 2009 Indie Book Awards. *Jazz From Row Six* is a splendid coffee table book that chronicles Jean's photographs of big band musicians taken from 1981–2007.

For twenty six years, from her seat in row six at the Van Wezel Performing Arts Center, in Sarasota Florida, Jean overcame constraints that most photographers would balk at. She was confined to her seat, not allowed to use flash, nor move around the theatre. Jean even had to buy a new camera when people seated next to her in the theatre complained about the noise her camera's shutter made.

Yet with all those obstacles, she persevered to create a magnificent and unique body of work with over 65 photographs of the performers in color as well as black and white.

Few photographers have had the opportunity to follow their subjects over the course of decades, as Jean has documenting the legends of jazz, many who were performing well into their 80s and 90s. Jean captures her subjects in a warm embrace of appreciation. *Jazz From Row* Six will appeal to both lovers of jazz music and admirers of great photography.

Signed copies of *Jazz From Row Six* are for sale at the Monterey General Store, with a percentage of the book sales going to the store.

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Are You a Friend of Lake Garfield?

How fortunate we are, in Monterey, to have such a jewel of a lake. It gives us an endless array of beautiful scenes, season after season, year after year. It gives us countless opportunities for fun and recreation. It adds value to all the homes in Monterey.

I am writing to ask you to become a 2009 member of the Friends of Lake Garfield (FLG) and to join us in our mission: to protect and preserve Lake Garfield for the enjoyment of all in Monterey. Your $35 membership goes a long way. Join at the Special Friend level for $50, or the Very Special Friend level for $100 and the money goes even further.

We put dues to work on such projects as:

1. Managing Drawdown: The most efficient, chemical-free way to prevent excess weeds from owning our shorelines. FLG has achieved a longtime goal, partnered with our town and the Conservation Commission. We've met the requirements of the Commonwealth of Massachusetts, allowing the Town to manage drawdown according to best principles of lake science for the health of Lake Garfield.

2. Additional Weed Control: We stocked the lake with a type of weevil that has a voracious appetite for milfoil, a weed that was choking our ecosystem. It worked wonders! Milfoil no longer poses a serious threat. We continue to monitor this issue.

3. Weed Control on the Shores: With matching funds from the Town, we're conducting a three-year insecticide-free test to control purple loosestrife, a weed that takes over shorelines in such great profusion that nothing else can grow.

4. Water testing: Three times each year, along with a state representative, we test the waters of Lake Garfield for phosphates, oxygen levels, temperature, and other parameters that monitor the health of the lake.

5: And don't forget LakeFest: Launched by the Friends of Lake Garfield to bring us all together for a joyous day on our wondrous lake. Fireworks are not part of the FLG budget, but, check out our website. There's a fireworks fund that you can contribute to if you'd like to see the skies light up at LakeFest, Saturday, August 15. Jot down the date (rain date, August 16). And while you're writing, jot down the dates of our summer Saturday meetings: June 6, July 4, and August 1, 9:30 a.m. at the Firehouse.

A lake like ours needs an organization like ours to protect its health and welfare. Please go to www.LakeGarfield.org for membership info, or send your name, address, and telephone number to Friends of Lake Garfield, Box 355, Monterey, MA 01245, along with a check for $35, or join as a Special Friend for $50, or a Very Special Friend for $100. Lake Garfield needs all the friends we can get.

— Julio Rodriguez, President, FLG

Free Film June 13
The Salt of the Earth

This revolutionary film from 1954 is based on a strike at New Mexico's Empire Zinc Mine. It is socialist, pro-union, and feminist. At the time it was made, during the height of the McCarthy anticommunist witch hunts and cruel blacklisting of so many in the entertainment field, *Salt of the Earth* ran into every kind of obstacle and was itself blacklisted. Projectionists failed to show up to run it, for fear of losing their jobs. There was violence on location during the filming, and a young Pauline Kael denounced it as "communist propaganda" when it first came out. Ironically, it was also denounced in communist USSR.

The cast comprises only five professional actors, the rest being local mining-family men, women, and children from southwest New Mexico. Their authenticity makes the film's effect immediate, moving. People are fighting for their lives, their livelihood, and their dignity. One of the miners' demands, for sanitation in their homes, is clearly as much a life-and-death matter as the demand for safer working conditions underground. In this story, the women who have been culturally acquiescent find their voices and their power.

The film was directed by Herbert Biberman and is 1 hour 30 minutes long, in English, black and white (filmed in 16 mm). All are welcome, no admission charged, Saturday, June 13, 7:00 p.m. in the Monterey Meetinghouse basement. Call 528-9385 (Bonner McAllester) for information.

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Kind Minds Think Alike

After a number of false starts, spring has finally sprung. The trees are blooming and the birds are chirping. The whirr of small gasoline engines is no longer that of power snow throwers but rather lawn-mowers and weed whackers. For weeks, it seemed like winter might never leave.

And in some ways, it hasn't. The devastation wrought by the ferocious winter storms is still with us. Everywhere we turn, we see twisted limbs and downed trees—constant reminders of just how devastatingly long and brutal a winter it was. Cleanup has been slow—and the longer it goes on, the longer we will be faced with this constant reminder.

Who can forget the frigid ice storm in the middle of December? I certainly won't. Electric and telephone wires strewn on the ground like children's play string. I was home alone, with very little water, a dwindling food supply, and no contact with the outside world. With each crack of dawn and setting sun, I ventured out to the woodshed to refill the empty log racks. There were six large trees down across our driveway—and many more on the road. There was nowhere for me to go—by car or by foot. The only thing I heard when I was outside was the thunderous sound of trees and tree limbs breaking off and hitting the ground.

Day turned into night—night into day—and I was alone and getting lonely. The days were getting shorter and the nights longer—and my isolation seemed like it was never going to end. Sleeping was not very comfortable because the cold woke me every forty-five minutes—rudely reminding me to add logs to the fire, just to make it *less* cold. From time to time, I'd sit in front of the fireplace, rocking in my rocker, imagining what it was like in the days before electricity and telephones—and how people managed under those conditions. As one thought led to another, the people I imagined became my parents, long-ago deceased, and my thoughts spiraled into morbidity. I had nowhere to run from my thoughts. Then the unthinkable happened. A flicker of light. Did I imagine it or was it real? In my confused state, I did not know if the electricity had been turned back on, or if a meteor or UFO had landed.

Not until I heard a knock at the door and saw people standing there did I realize that the light was that of a flashlight! I was frightened, but this was no time to deny anyone access, so I let them in. They looked like they had arrived from outer space—heavy winter coats, hats, scarves, gloves, and boots—so bundled up that had one of them been my wife, I probably would not have been able to identify her.

When they took off their hats and opened their scarves, relief set in. It was Chief of Police Gareth Backhaus and his wife, Kellie—sent to rescue a woman trapped in the house for days. Their dinner would wait until "she" was safe. "She" turned out to be "he" – and the "he" was me. I turned down their offer to leave for a safer place, we chatted for a while, and then they left for dinner.

I stoked the fire and sat back down in my rocker to reflect on human kindness. And then another flicker of light. This time I was less paranoid—thinking that perhaps Gareth and/or Kellie left something behind. So as the light brightened and the outline of a person appeared in front of the door, I did not hesitate to open it. Once inside, I realized that it was neither Gareth nor Kellie—this time it was Officer Tom Miller, sent by Gareth to deliver two full bags of food and water to me. Some generous soul, whose identity Tom would never reveal, provided me with sustenance for the duration of the storm.

The anguish of this past winter will undoubtedly fade with the coming of spring and summer—but the kindness and generosity expressed by Gareth, Kellie, Tom, and the anonymous donor will stay with me forever.

— Hillel M. Maximon

Epilogue: The next day the severe conditions improved somewhat, and I was finally able to snake my way down the road in search of a telephone so that I could call my wife—the "she" that Gareth had come to rescue the previous night—to tell her that I was safe. To my surprise, there she was on our road, slowly making her way home as the National Grid linemen cleared the road.

My wife was told not to come—but she could no longer sit helplessly by in Boston. There in her car were two bags of food and water! Kind minds think alike.

Eileen Lawlor, LICSW

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Historian John Demos at Bidwell House

John Demos will be the featured speaker at the Bidwell House on Saturday, June 20, at 10 a.m. The Bidwell House governing board appointed John Demos as a trustee of the museum at the annual meeting in May. Recently retired from Yale University where he was Samuel Knight Professor of American history, Demos holds degrees from Harvard University and Berkeley; he also studied at Oxford University and the Institute for Psychoanalysis in Chicago.

Author of many prize-winning books, Demos will give guests of the Bidwell House a preview of his work in progress, which is a story of hope and betrayal in the early republic—the story of "The Heathen School." He is best known for his 1994 *The Unredeemed Captive*, winner of the coveted Francis Parkman Award. Demos and his wife were hosts of the Bidwell's Midsummer's Eve Garden Party last July. Residents of Tyringham, they live in the historic 1794 Brewer House and have an extensive collection of eighteenth- and nineteenth-century furnishings and decorative arts.

The Bidwell House is a nonprofit museum specializing in a descriptive tour of what life was like when the Berkshires were first settled by colonists. For further information, visit the web site at www.bidwellhousemuseum. Admission will be charged and includes a picnic reception for the author following the lecture.

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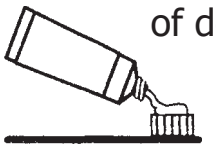

528-6520

Route 23 Monterey

Free Admission at Hancock Shaker Village for Berkshire Co. Residents June 13 & 14

Hancock Shaker Village will give free admission to Berkshire Country residents (with proof of driver's license) on Saturday and Sunday, June 13 and 14. In addition, June 13 will be Family Planting Day in the Greylock Children's Garden. Families who visited Hancock Shaker Village during the spring "Baby Animals on the Shaker Farm" event received free seed kits containing heirloom Jacobs cattle bean seeds, peat pots, soil, and instructions. They are encouraged to return to the Village with their cultivated seeds on Family Planting Day to plant their seedlings in the new garden.

Hancock Shaker Village is situated on a picturesque expanse of farm, field, and woodland. The fully restored village includes twenty historic buildings, heirloom medicinal and vegetable gardens, and 22,000 examples of Shaker furniture, crafts, tools, and clothes that depict daily life at the Shakers' City of Peace through its 225 years, as well as heritage farm animals and spectacular gardens and hiking trails. There are daily tours, craft and cooking demonstrations, lectures, and a variety of activities for children and families, as well as the Museum Store and Shaker-inspired cuisine at the Village Harvest Café. The Discovery Room offers hands-on opportunities for kids of all ages to try their hand at chair seat weaving, working at a loom, trying on Shaker-style clothing, or milking a life-sized replica of a cow.

Currently exhibited in the Chace Gallery of the Center for Shaker Studies through Labor Day is Gather Up the Fragments: The Andrews Shaker Collection. Pioneers in the field of Shaker studies, Faith and Edward Deming Andrews collected directly from the Shakers themselves from the 1920s through the 1960s. This show features many never-before-exhibited pieces and a fascinating tale of intrigue, ethics, passion, and art scholarship. This is the last season to see Gather Up the Fragments in the Berkshires, as the exhibit will travel nationally in 2010.

Hancock Shaker Village is located on Route 20 in Pittsfield, Massachusetts, just west of the junction of Routes 20 and 41. For GPS purposes, the Village is located at 34 Lebanon Mountain Rd., Hancock, Mass. 01237. Or enter 1843 W. Housatonic St., Pittsfield, Mass. 01201, then proceed 1/2 mile further West on Route 20 to the parking lot.

The Village is open from 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. daily. For more information, call 800-817-1137 or go to www.hancock-shakervillage.org.

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Otis Fair Call for Artisans and Vendors

The Otis Library and Museum, Inc.'s annual Summer Craft and Country Fair will be held July 11, from 10 a.m.–3 p.m. on the beautiful Otis town green on route 8 in Otis center. Artists and vendors are encouraged to sign up now for this well attended and very popular annual event attracting crowds of locals, tourists, and summer residents. Spaces are 10' x 10' and cost only $25. Tables are not provided. Tarps are also suggested for shaded booths.

To reserve your space, call Kathy Bort or Lois Hall at the Otis Library, 413-269-0109, or Anita Weinstein at 413-269-4984 anytime.

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Internship, Month 1

I moved in and out of dimly lit rooms
in rumpled scrubs and practical clogs.
Wordlessly, trying not to disturb,
I slid my stethoscope here
then there.
Vitals noted. Lists attended to.

And then her.
Younger than me,
lovely,
hair closely cropped, cheekbones high, eyes knowing.
With a disarming gaze, she would make her morning pronouncements—
I had no need to wear makeup.
She liked me better than the other doctors.
I was a good listener; she would tell me things.
All the while, her illness was teaching me
that which
I did not want to learn at her expense.

I did not know one could walk around with a hemoglobin of 3.8.
I did not know that one's blood cells could be destroyed almost as fast as we could transfuse.
I did not know how one could be so vibrant and passionate and young and be dying of AIDS.

I did not know what the psychosis of steroids looked like.

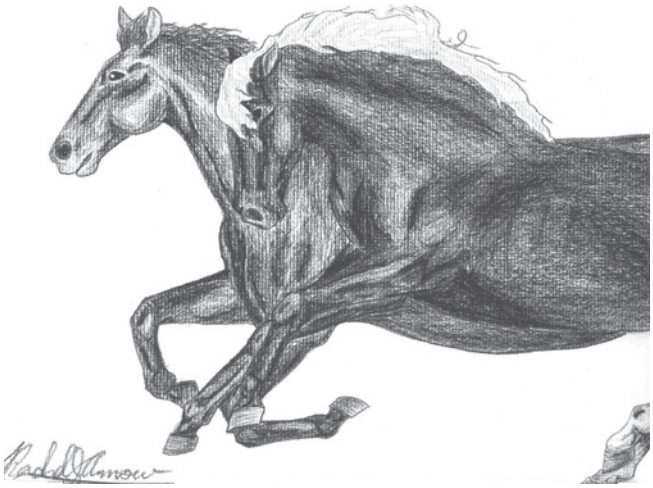
And then I did.

She sped past me, slight,
and graceful,
dragging her IV pole along.
Alarmed, I followed, imploring her to go back to her room.
It was not safe. Her heart was straining; her anemia was so very severe.
"I want to PRAY," she howled at me.

It did not end well that day.
I spotted her psychiatrist in the coffee shop
and yelled for help.
She made it to the chapel
and stood—
crying, fragile, fury filled,
below the soaring ceiling.
Broken Snapple bottle in hand,
orange liquid spilled across the floor.

One to one it is called—someone was posted outside her door for her own safety.
She managed to get past that posted guard once,
saying she was going to talk to me at the nurses station.
How she did it, I do not know—
breezed past me, emerged from the hospital,
to feel the cold night air in her thin, open-backed gown,
hailed a cab, traveled home to Queens.
But she did
Lie in her own bed
One last time.

— Michelle Grotz, MD, Los Angeles, February 2009



Us

Thinking of being thinner
I saw myself at twenty-one
Thinking then of attracting men
I saw him then me again
A cloud of shimmering particles
Transhaping into him
He asked at breakfast
"Do you believe in afterlife?"
"No" I said
He went on "For people who do
It must be comfort
Holding on to holding again
The charms of loved ones
But I find comfort thinking
Of returning to the earth
Of wonderful how we just sprang up out of it!
All these wonderful people."
"Some of us" I said
"Ah yes. But even people who do bad things
Are amazing organisms!"
I saw our particles
Blending and blowing sowing
Over the gardens and meadow
With the pets and crabapples.

— Elizabeth Silk

Orange

Orange is summer,
Bright, sunny, and soothing.
Orange is refreshing,
Calm, warm, and sweet.
Orange is a moment
Where there is no worry,
Just comfort.
Orange is fire,
Silently whispering,
Urging you to awaken,
And embracing you
With its soft crackling flames.
Orange is summer,
Here one moment,
Gone the next.
And I wonder
Where it went ...

— Charina Hanley (age 13)

Speak tenderly of Jerusalem

Speak tenderly of Jerusalem!
Its nails transfix a womb of
unborn parchment.
This is stretched out
between three testaments
and gives birth
with sharp cries of recognition
to an older, a far older covenant.

We come together with embers
to exchange the sacraments
in eponymous anguish.
Every time we hold hands
surrender, cherish, kiss
our blind codes of passion
are erected
like new pillars of protest
in the desert of revenge.
How dangerous is their anointing!

Speak tenderly of Jerusalem!
We become when we touch,
we become the fingers of God
scouring the ancient holy ground
plunging deep, turning over the blood
searching for what was risked and lost —
It seems almost He has given up
turned away
that only we
can find the purpose and the peace
in the wrenching screams of her labor.

— A. O. Howell

Last Letter from College

Graduation Day

Graduation Day is cloudy, but I prefer to be an optimist. Although the weather station warned of a 20 percent chance of rain, I refuse to believe that it will actually happen. The last few days of packing produced an empty room, void of all furnishings that distinguish it from any other college dorm room: the walls are bare, drawers are empty, and the dust rabbits—too big to be bunnies—are everywhere. I change into my summer outfit and the synthetic black robe that will bleed if it does rain and put on the cap whose cardboard top is also at the mercy of the weather. Around my waist, I put on a silk scarf doubled over so I can slip my camera, access card and cell phone somewhere; I have no pockets and I do not want to bring a bag.

As I open the door of my dorm to walk over to the graduation festivities, the 20 percent chance makes good on its promise, and I am forced back to my room where one of my suitemates kindly cuts out arm and head holes in a plastic bag for me to wear. I walk across the campus, and before I descend down the hill into crowd I pause in front of Mead Chapel to gawk at the sea of blue; almost everyone is wearing a blue poncho. After I put mine on under my gown, two layers of plastic and a black robe separate me from camera and phone. I suddenly realize I have no idea where the graduates are supposed to line up, and I do not see a group of five hundred students anywhere. Follow the blue ponchos, or black hats, both? I finally figure out where the line is, remarkably hidden from view.

My phone rings as I run down the path looking for my department's signpost; I'll get to it later. I arrive on time, the missed call was from a fellow political science major—they were apparently looking for me. I dimly register that the grin on my face is not for show; it is genuine and possibly permanent. Even the steady drizzle cannot really dampen my spirits, although I am slightly worried that my hat may begin to droop soon.

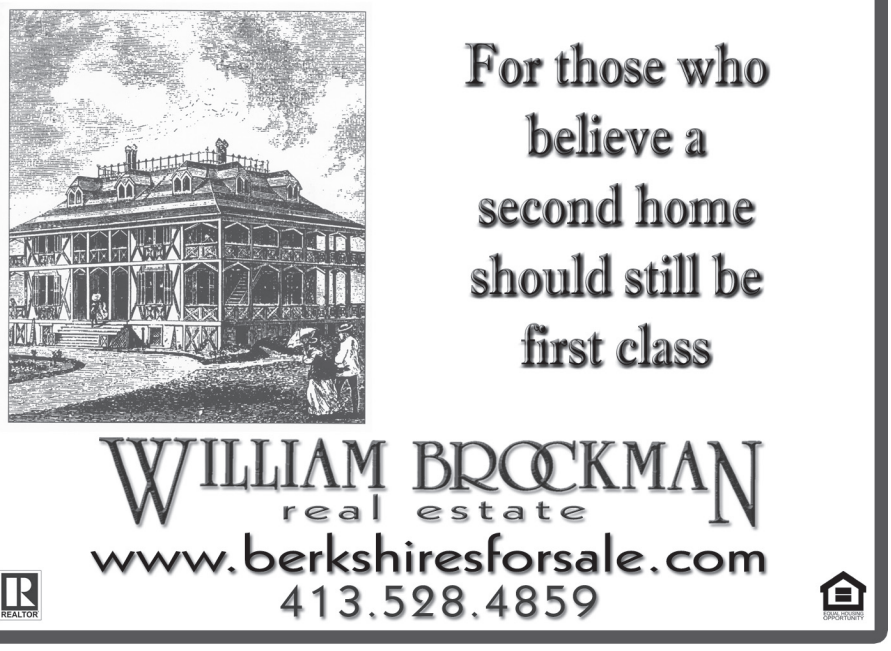
As the line starts moving along the path, we see the professors up ahead, standing in groups, wearing their colorful regalia. The head of dining services

Maynard Forbes

is walking along the line handing out egg sandwiches and napkins, I was too nervous to eat this morning, so I grab one. Later my friend joked that it was for all the hung-over students; somehow I think she was onto something, but I would not know from personal experience in this case. Our line pauses near the stage; people are everywhere, and two rows of students split like the Red Sea for the professors to proceed through us. My mother finds me in the lineup just then; she gives me a great hug, and then we watch the professors walk by. One professor, also a friend of mine that I met before I enrolled as a student, leaned down and gave me a quick hug, and it meant the world. I am going to miss these wonderful individuals more than I can possibly comprehend. The rain continues steadily coming down.

The ceremony begins; there are the opening speeches, and then the student commencement speaker, whose remarks had just the right amount of poignancy, with some forward thinking and doses of humor. As I sit there listening, I glance to my left and glimpse my dad's face at the end my row; how he found me so quickly, I am not sure, but he is on hand with his camera to document the moments of this event that I am sure I will not remember. In fact much of it is passing in a haze. I am keenly aware of the umbrella above me that is held by another student, which keeps me relatively dry and yet dumps buckets of water on me unexpectedly: blessing, curse, unclear. The honorary degrees are awarded, and then we stand for the invocation. As we move our tassels over, the sun comes out and the sky begins to clear.

The head of Stonybrook Farms is the graduation speaker. He is an entrepreneur whose business was built from the ground up; it is an organic and environmentally conscious endeavor, which stands as an inspiring example of a business whose



economic profit is not hindered by environmentally friendly practices. It is inspiring, to sit there and listen and believe, but I think I need to go back to the transcript because I really was not focused on the speech. As the class of 2009 begins to file up on stage to get diplomas, the sun shines brightly down upon us and I lose all patience with my robes of plastic. I hand my hat to the young man sitting next to me, unzip the robe, and literally rip the plastic off me, and my entire body takes a breath of the fresh clean spring air.

Our row stands, my dad clasps my hand as I pause briefly by him; "You did it girl," and then I am moving forward for my walk across the stage. Even as I concentrate on my handshake from the President of the College, and diploma from the head of the Political Science Department, I hear the shouting of my posse—seventeen wonderful family members and friends who drove up here to watch this moment—and I wave as I move off stage. I cannot contain the grin, it is just there, and I am a graduate, a real graduate, I proceed back to my seat to cheer for the rest of my friends. Then comes the official declaration of the class of 2009, hats fly up into the clear blue sky, and it is a picture-perfect moment.

The second of two songs we sing is the alma mater song, and it is suddenly overwhelming to think that it is now my alma mater. I am no longer a student here; I am a graduate, and this is it. The young man next to me gets too choked up to sing at points, and four years of memories start flashing through my mind. This journey is over. We file out of our rows, the professors on either side applauding us, and faces are a blur. Right after the professors, my posse appears full of hugs, smiles, cameras, and congratulations. The weather is now stunning, everyone is here, and it is a day of jubilee. I find many of my friends in the next thirty minutes before I leave for lunch with family and friends; it is unbelievably weird to think I might not see them again, or at least for a long time.

Singing my way down Route 7 for the last time, I cannot begin to reflect what the future will offer, or what these last few hours signify. Four years ago when I began this column, I had no idea what adventures life would bring my way, and I realize that I am no more certain as a graduate. It is time to finish my AmeriCorp applications, learn how to enjoy reading a book word-for-word and cover-to-cover, get some regular exercise, and focus on the future. The next letter will not be from college, or necessarily anywhere specific right away, but it will come from me because I am still here, learning and moving forward.

— Tarsi Dunlop

ॐ

Call for Artists and Photographers

New Marlborough is celebrating its 250th anniversary this year. The Meeting House Gallery has a tradition of invitational exhibits; however choosing whom to invite this special year was difficult, so we are conducting two juried exhibits instead.

Photographers Celebrate New Marlborough Now will run from July 25 to August 23. *Artists Celebrate New Marlborough* will run from August 29 to October 3. While the themes of the artworks for these shows must be related to New Marlborough, exhibitors need not be New Marlborough residents.

Gallery hours have been expanded to 11a.m.–4 p.m. Friday, Saturday, and Sunday, and many fine events are scheduled for the summer, which should increase the audience for the Gallery.

For more information or applications, call Elizabeth Lombardi, 413-229-8972, or Robin Tost, 413-229-7707.

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The Three Life-Giving Sisters Take the Train

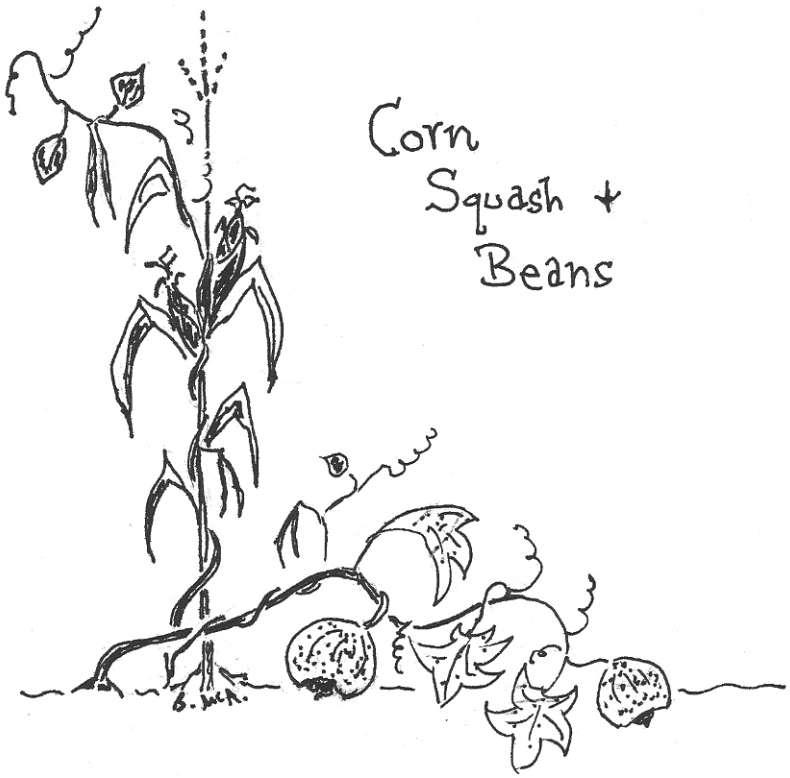
Some folks fall into the counting habit. My dad used to count shovels of gravel, loads in the wheelbarrow, and then surprise everyone with knowing how many tons he had moved around lately. Myself, I sometimes find I am counting my steps as I peg along the road, who knows why. Maybe it's because I have a three-foot pace and I have been measuring garden beds and rows for planting. Modern dancers keep a mental count going so they know when to do the next figure in a sequence. Counting isn't that hard.

The next step, though, is calculation. Count the miles you've traveled, by plane or bus or bike or car, and then figure your carbon emissions. Some people go so far as to calculate some sort of environmental cash cost, which they then ante up to a carbon-saving enterprise, like donating little solar panels and wiring and CF bulbs to a community that would otherwise burn kerosene for lights.

As if this weren't too much mind twisting already, some have gone so far as to categorize miles: work miles, love miles, food miles. That last idea is not even about how far I travel, it's how far food travels to get to me. Travel is travel, after all, and most times it puts carbon dioxide into the air and hastens climate catastrophe for all of us—you, me, the slugs, the showy orchids, the chestnut-sided warbler, the oyster, the polar bear.

At the end of March I got on the train in Pittsfield and started racking up the miles headed west. I'd read that train and bus miles, divided up among all us passengers, would do far less carbon-emissions harm than my car or a plane. The ironic thing is that I took my own food from home with me, thus introducing food miles to the calculations. Maybe you could argue that the food went along for free, since it was tucked into my backpack.

I was gone a little over two weeks, living on the Three Life-Giving Sisters of the northeast: corn, beans, and squash. These sisters grew here in Monterey in a garden up the hill from our log house. I'd dried them and tried them, various ways, until I knew I had the fixings for a dried stew that was delicious and sustaining. The corn was cooked before drying, using a Mesoamerican technique called "nixtamalization," or cooking with ashes, that makes corn a better balanced protein source and frees up its niacin. I grow Painted Mountain corn and save seed from one year to the next.



The beans were precooked (with chili peppers) before they were dried. I took two kinds: California cranberry beans, which I picked up years ago at a roadside stand and have been growing and planting ever since; and kidney beans.

The squash, a buttercup type, was just sliced up raw and dried. I added dried collards to these sisters, just because I had a lot and I believe in collards.

When I got off the train in Arizona, I went shopping for Coleman fuel for my camp stove, a little Whisper-light backpacker's model. After that I was fine as long as I could refill my water bottles, which is not something you take for granted in the desert. I made my way south to Pima County, camping and living on the sisters as I went, soaking the corn a few hours and putting everything else right in the pot when I started the stove.

The whole thing was an experiment, starting way back in the winter when I began figuring out the stew. I still have my notes stuck on the fridge: "2 hands corn, 2 hands beans, some collards and squash. Add water, put on heat. Boils after 5 min., boil another 5 min., let sit 10 min. Squash and collards fine, beans … okay, corn … still not right."

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By the time the sisters and I got to Arizona, we were past the counting stages. That was during our research phase. I'd discovered that "2 hands" was twice as much as I could eat, so dropped back to one handful each of corn and beans. I could cook a double meal just before sundown and it would keep fine for breakfast. Lunch was often the water bottle and dried apples. It's surprising how well they last, until 5:00 p.m., when it is time to cook before the sun goes down.

Believe it or not, with all my careful counting I still brought some of the sisters home again. I am saving them for my next trip, which will be by bus to Rhode Island. Buses and trains cost more than planes and cars, for travel. But if you take the sisters along you can make up the money, and have the pleasure of food from home. This was an element of my trip that defied enumeration, couldn't be counted up. The western landscape was another, the big sky and the long luxurious contemplative hours on the train. Try counting: 50 hours times 2, endless vistas, 3 sisters, 2 hands each of corn and beans. What do you get? It's not a sum; it's satisfaction that lasts.

— Bonner J. McAllester

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Birds of All Feathers 2009

Once again, here is a bird list from sightings around Monterey, primarily from the Lake Buel area. Encouraging were the sightings of two ospreys hunting for fish above the lake at the same time, and two bald eagles together eating thawing fish on melting ice. This may imply that the populations of raptors are increasing in our region. One thing I know for sure: birds flourish around lakes and wetlands. Still fascinating are all the migrating birds and the one-time observations of those birds just passing through. So here is a list of birds I observed from June '08 to June '09:

Belted kingfisher, ruby-throated humming bird, eastern kingbird, cedar waxwing, American goldfinch, mallard duck, flicker, great blue heron, American kestrel, osprey, double-crested cormorant, yellow-rumped warbler, white-crowned sparrow, wood duck, robin, slate-colored junco, cardinal, black-capped chickadee, herring gull, blue jay, hooded merganser, Canada goose, tufted titmouse, red-bellied woodpecker, American crow, bald eagle, mourning dove, downy woodpecker, red-winged black bird, common grackle, northern raven, European starling, common merganser, chipping sparrow, eastern phoebe, wild turkey, brown-headed cowbird, house finch, song sparrow, tree swallow, white-throated sparrow, blue-gray gnatcatcher, yellow warbler, hairy woodpecker, Guinea hen, spotted sandpiper, broad-winged hawk, warbling vireo, barn swallow, mourning warbler, eastern bluebird, Baltimore oriole, red-tailed hawk, fish crow, veery, yellow-bellied sapsucker and muscovy.

The bald eagle with its great wingspan, flies high and gracefully above Lake Buel, then disappears into Warner Mountain forest. The robins hop patiently around the grasses looking for vulnerable worms. The white-breasted nuthatch, always headfirst, climbs down the red maple trunks in search of bark insects. A variety of warblers dart from tree to tree along the banks of the lake in search of food, never staying put in one place but for a few seconds, during their seasonal migration. The mergansers move effortlessly through the water in parade form, the male first, then the female. The red-tailed hawk is aggressively chased by a crow, presumingly staking its territory. The Baltimore oriole stays high in the willows, whistling loud and distinct piping notes. The great blue heron glides close to the surface of the water, blending in with the blue-gray color, searching for fish and a safe haven. Lake Buel is a wildlife magnet and one of the few natural lakes in the county. Besides providing the birds with a broad variety of food, the lake has a special charm that is well appreciated by birds and by those who watch them.

— Stephen Rose

Getting Ready for Tomatoes

Last night we drove home through the Tyringham valley. With the windows open in the mild night air, we could hear the peepers and tree frogs singing to their sweethearts for all they were worth. It seems a little late for peepers, which I always imagine to be the messengers letting us know that spring is really here. Their serenade just disappears all of a sudden when the weather turns warmer, but this year they are lingering on.

At the same time, a couple of reckless fireflies started flashing in the trees. Fireflies? At the same time as peepers? What a great reminder that the weather remains so variable in late May and early June. How are we supposed to know what to plant when?

The broccoli and cauliflower, carrots, lettuce, peas, and onions are all up and running. The asparagus and raspberry canes, newly arrived, finally made it into the ground, and now I'm waiting for signs of life. The tomatoes and squash plants got pushed out the door during a few days of 80-degree weather, but they are still in their little pots and trays. I can't take the plunge yet and put them in the ground. Tomatoes in particular just sit there and look miserable when the nights are cool, and the squashes and melons need hot weather too. Better to wait until the night temperatures consistently remain in the 50s or higher before putting these last plants in the ground.

The peas need staking, of course, and if previous years are any guide they will be seriously in need of support by the time I get to them. You don't have to tempt fate in this way—pea vines grow more vigorously if they never have the chance to fall over. Your choice of pea vine supports is rather vast. You can make tripods of large bamboo poles and train the vines up each pole, or you can build a squared-off arbor and drop strings down from the crosspiece, letting the vines creep upward in a long row. A wide variety of netting also exists that can be draped over your support structure for the peas to climb on. My favorite method is to use pea sticks—thin tree branches stuck in the ground all through the pea patch—and let the vines cover them. After last winter's ice storms there is no shortage of branches available, and they can be tossed back in the woods when their job is done.

The idea of fertilizing peas, or any legume, may seem unnecessary to most people because legumes extract nitrogen from the air and fix it in the soil without any help from us. There is room for debate, as it turns out, because the pea vines may need a little help when they first start growing. A couple of applications of complete organic fertilizer, like fish emulsion, are recommended by some growers to get the plants off to a good start.

What to feed vegetables and when to feed them can really get overwhelming. Here are a few basic guidelines: some vegetables are heavy feeders and may need more fertilizer during the season. These include asparagus, broccoli and all the brassicas, all the cabbages, melons, peppers, tomatoes, corn, and squash. Surprisingly, lettuce is a heavy feeder too. Other vegetables, such as beans, peas, leeks, carrots, and all the herbs, are light feeders and will do just fine with the compost and other soil amendments you add to the garden at the beginning of the season.

Compost is the single most important ingredient of rich, fertile soil. By now you have probably added compost to your soil, but if not you can still spread a few inches on the top of the garden bed. All-around good choices for soil amendments include bonemeal and blood meal, rock phosphate, and greensand. The bonemeal and blood meal will boost the available nitrogen in your soil, and the rock phosphate adds phosphorous, which improves growth and fruit production. Greensand is a great source of potassium, calcium, and other trace minerals that plants need for photosynthesis and overall strength. All these additives are readily available.

You may be vegetarian and prefer not to use animal products in your soil, or you may just be wary of animal diseases that could conceivably remain in the dried bones or blood. In that case alfalfa meal is an excellent alternative source of nitrogen. It's not that easy to find, but you can order it online pretty easily, as it is also used for chicken feed. I'm going with alfalfa meal this year and I'll keep you posted on the results.

For the heavy feeders, plan to add the soil amendments, compost tea, or fish

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emulsion lightly every two to three weeks during the summer. The goal is consistent growth, so moderate regular feeding will do the job.

It's always a bit tricky to write about watering. The last time I tackled the subject of drought, for example, it rained for a solid week between the writing and seeing it in print. I felt a little silly. In the Berkshires, who knows what the summer will bring? Vegetables need steady, evenly moist soil, so be prepared to provide about one inch of water per week. An inexpensive rain gauge will help you to determine when you need to water. And ignore those thunderstorms! The rain comes down too fast and furiously to be absorbed properly by the garden, so it doesn't count. If we get a good soaking rain that lasts for a few hours, then you can skip the watering session.

Finally, don't forget those weeds! No one wants to spend the summer weeding the garden, so a little extra attention to the weeds now, when they are very small, will save you hours later. Turn on the radio, put a hat on, talk the kids into it, whatever. Have fun.

— Ruth Green

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Simon Winchester and Ben Luxon Cover Victorian Era

On Saturday, June 27 at 8 p.m., The Sandisfield Arts Center presents, "Victoria and Her Empire: An Evening of Words and Music." The Victorian Era of the British Empire produced a surfeit of great books, songs, poems and plays. Sandisfield neighbors, Ben Luxon and Simon Winchester, setting aside English politics, tell the story of fifty of those years (1870 to 1920) through its rich romantic and artistic legacy. Tickets are $20 with reservations strongly recommended.

Ben Luxon CBE, one of Britain's most renowned baritones, has performed in all of the world's major opera houses. Having lost much of his hearing, Ben has turned to the spoken word.

Simon Winchester OBE, author, journalist, and broadcaster, is probably best known for his unique works of nonfiction, including the best seller *The Professor and the Madman, A Tale of Murder, Insanity and the Making of the Oxford English Dictionary*, and his most recent, *The Man Who Loved China*.

Though they live within walking distance, the two Englishmen rarely see each other because of Winchester's heavy travel schedule. Luxon and Winchester were having tea one afternoon this past winter and reading Rudyard Kipling when the idea came to them of delving deeper into that extraordinary period of Britain's history. "Once we had the idea of developing a program, it was irresistible," said Luxon. "During Victoria's reign, factories replaced fields as Britain's first source of income. Railways and steam replaced horse power, and the population of the British Isles almost doubled. Great authors were serialized in newspapers and magazines, and there was a huge demand for entertainment of all kinds at all social levels. What a tapestry for stories, poems, art and music."

The Sandisfield Arts Center is located on Hammertown Road and Route 57 in the geographic center of the town. For directions and more information, visit www.sandisfieldartscenter.org or call 413-258-4100.

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The Lord

Fifty years after a harrowing escape from Bolshevik Russia, my father longed for a reunion with his siblings who had remained there. One thing worried him, however: the possibility of being detained when the authorities discovered that he had left illegally. "Once a subject of Russia, always a subject of Russia," he stated gravely.

"But Dad," I pressed him, "How're they gonna know your history? You're an American citizen. You speak English perfectly. What would make them think you escaped?"

"They know, they know," he droned, dismissing my naiveté with a wave of his hand. "The border guards shot at me when I ran into Poland. They keep records."

"Aw, c'mon, Dad. It's been fifty years! What kind of records would they have? How old were you? Eighteen, right?"

He sat for a moment, gazing into mid space. "Yeah, I was eighteen," he said, his voice subdued. "I was the oldest, and there were seven more behind me, starving half the time. I had to get out, and I had to come up with a way to help them."

I patted his shoulder. "And you did, Dad. You saved all of them. So now they'd love to see you and thank you for all those packages you sent."

"It's been a long time," he mused. "I want to see them too, but I have to be sure the authorities aren't going to hold me." He drew a long breath. "No, I'm not going until I'm sure there won't be a problem."

After consultation with our local congressman, Dad got the assurances he needed. He was still a bit jumpy about it, but he went ahead with his plans. Our cousins buzzed with the news. Uncle Boris was going to Russia!

As it turned out, the trip proceeded without incident, but when he got home he looked totally deflated. To quote one of his Russian proverbs, "The mountain got pregnant and had a mouse."

"Nothing has changed," he grumbled. "The Communists are no better than the Czar."

"How do you mean, Dad? Because of the poverty?"

"No, they have their necessities, but my brothers and sisters were afraid to talk to me indoors," he said. "The walls had ears. The government is corrupt. Nothing has changed. Nothing."

"But when you had a chance to talk privately, how were they? Did you enjoy their company?"

"Sure I did. They treated me like a king. Couldn't do enough for me. But when they were around each other, everything changed. They argued constantly. Constantly," he repeated. "They're a bunch of cats and dogs! Now listen to me," he said, pointing his finger. "I'm sure you're curious about them, but I'm telling you, they're bad news. Always fighting, always spreading stories about each other. Some of them are talking about coming over here, and if they do, you stay away from them. Especially your cousin Irina."

"Why? What's wrong with her?"

"She's disrespectful!" he said. "She gave me sarcastic answers when I asked about her work. I have no idea what she does for a living. A single girl, and she comes home with fancy clothes! Nobody knows how she affords them. Even my brother says to me, 'I don't understand it. How does she get these things?' But *I* know how she gets them. She's a *courveh*! A whore! That's how she affords it! And she's a manipulator. She'll take advantage of anyone, even her own family. Stay away from all of them, I'm telling you, but especially her! "

"That's pretty harsh, Dad," I countered. "There's all kind of black market activity over there. Maybe she just knows the ropes."

"Yeah, sure," he scoffed. "She's a regular entrepreneur!"

Like many young men, I knew more about the ways of the world than my father. In Irina's case I smugly deduced that a generation gap was in play when it came to his assessment of her character. So several years later, shortly after she had immigrated to New York, I was actually pleased to get a call from her. It came in the middle of Thanksgiving dinner. My son, home from college, answered the phone.

"It's your cousin Irina," he said with a quizzical expression. Then, with his hand covering the receiver, "She has an accent. Who's Irina?"

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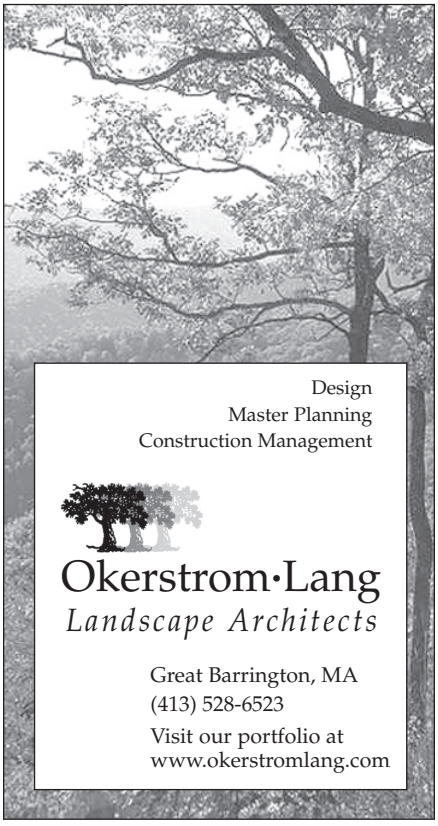

I gave him a reassuring gesture. "Later," I said.

"Hello, cousin Dawid," she began. "Is your cousin, Irina."

"Yes, Irina!" I answered enthusiastically. "Good to hear from you."

"Good alzo hear you. I ask you somesink, Dawid. You are wary busy today?"

"Well, we have some family and guests here for the holiday, but what do you have in mind?"

"Oh, I hopink introduce you my fiancé Nigel. We not far, but if you busy, is okay."

"No, no, Irina," I reassured her. "We're finishing dinner now but why don't you join us for dessert. I'm sure everyone would love to meet you."

"Oh, zat so nice, Dawid," she cooed. "Pleece, you give Nigel directions, we come wisit you."

They arrived in grand style: Jaguar convertible, fashionably dressed, and carrying two eye-popping magnums of Dom Perignon champagne. Irina wore a swept-up hairdo, a bit heavy on the makeup with thick black eyeliner, *alaRusse*, but striking nevertheless in a sleek skirt and blouse with tasteful black pumps. And Nigel's ensemble was *très debonaire*—suede camel blazer, artfully neglected burgundy scarf, designer eyewear, and tasseled Italian loafers—a study in continental panache.

"How do you do," he nodded regally, his diction a perfect King's English. He then produced a small but elegant gold case, springing it open with a touch of his manicured thumb. From it he withdrew an embossed business card and offered it as if a gift.

Lord Nigel Thorne-Thomsen
Investment Banker

The card also contained a Manhattan phone number and prestigious business address. Wow, I thought. High finance and British nobility! My Russian cousin didn't waste any time. Whatever she is, she's nobody's fool.

A bit overwhelmed by Nigel's credentials and breeding, I was deferential as I engaged him in conversation. "I must say, Nigel, you're the first titled person I've ever met."

"Oh, please don't be impressed," he said casually. "My family has some sort of ancient connection to the Duke of something or other. Very stuffy, actually, and of no real value, I assure you. My success has been my own doing."

"That's certainly commendable," I said. "How did you happen to get into investment banking?"

"Hmm," he mused, "Well, I attended Oxford, where one of my professors recognized my talent for finance and encouraged me to attend the London School of Economics. From there I was recruited to Wall Street, and at this point I've branched off on my own. Consulting, troubleshooting, that sort of thing," he said offhandedly.

"Quite a history," I said. "I have to confess, I really don't understand much about the world of finance."

"Oh, I'd be pleased to discuss it with you," he offered. "Perhaps another time when we might meet privately. Do you get to New York often?"

I sensed a golden opportunity. "Actually," I said, "I do get there from time to time. In fact, if you have an opening, tomorrow's a vacation day for me."

He drew a leather notebook from his inside blazer pocket. "Tomorrow?" he frowned. "I'm afraid my schedule's full, but I think I could make some time for lunch. There's an excellent restaurant near my office. We can meet there if you like."

Over Nigel's shoulder I saw Irina, smiling at us. Maybe she could convince him to let me in on one of his projects.

During dessert all eyes were on our exotic guests. Clearly, everyone was starstruck. While we served coffee, Irina chatted up the women, dazzling them with her jewelry while Nigel generously fielded a variety of questions from the men. Eventually the conversation wound down, our company left, and we arranged ourselves in a cozy seating arrangement in the living room. I was planning to ask Irina about

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her decision to leave Russia and how she had adapted to life in America, but before I could formulate a question she squared her shoulders and faced me directly.

"Dawid," she said, "listen me. I want tell you, my Nigel financial *genius*!"

Nigel smiled and cleared his throat, preparing to speak, but Irina preempted him by leaning in and touching my arm. "We design *amazink* inwestment program," she confided. "Big New York bank make for us offer. *Twelve million dollars*!"

"No kidding!" I said. "Well, that's great, Irina. It sounds like you two will be on easy street from now on."

"What means 'easy street'?"

"Well, you'll have enough money that you won't have to work anymore. You'll be able to retire."

She recoiled as if deeply offended. "Oh! We not sellink!" she said huffily.

"You're not?"

"No! Of course not! We sell, get twelve million, but bank use our program make *billions*!"

In the awkward aftermath of Irina's incredible statement, Nigel happened to cross his legs, calling my attention to his right shoe. Something was wrong. The sole was thick, very unlike the expensive designer styles.

I was trying to rationalize this inconsistency while Irina resumed her spiel. "So we keep secret ziss program, you understand?"

"Uh-huh … I think so," I said, continuing to appraise Nigel's accoutrements. There was also an odd sheen to his Rolex, and the camel blazer seemed to crease stiffly when he moved.

"Because we explain you, it wary important you keep secret. Beleef me, Dawid, many, many people try steal from us."

I took a hard look at her eyes. They were impenetrable, but I was finally starting to get the picture.

"So it's a valuable secret, but you want to share it with me?"

"Yes, of course we share wiss you, becauss Uncle Boris help us in Sowiet Union." As she waited for my response she leaned back on the sofa, her face beaming like an angel.

I couldn't believe it. My father had sized her up perfectly.

"Well," I answered, "that's very nice of you, Irina, but unfortunately my money's all tied up right now, so I guess I'll have to pass on your offer."

She leaned forward, her showy jewelry sparkling in the evening light. *Was that fake too?* "But ziss big opportunity!" she stated incredulously. "If you not do ziss now, maybe too late."

"Yes, I understand," I said. "This is just a case of bad timing for me."

Irina recognized a lost cause when she saw one. Her demeanor changed instantly. All business now, she looked at her watch and gave Nigel a nudge. The good-byes were perfunctory. Irina barely spoke and walked out without so much as turning around, and although Nigel tried to keep his composure, when he asked for directions to the interstate, his cultured British accent seemed to slip into a hint of Bronxese.

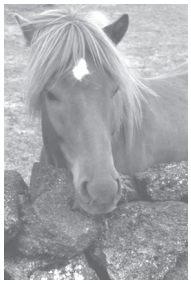
When the door closed behind them, we all looked at each other in amazement. "What the hell was that!" my son blurted. "They're gonna pass up twelve million bucks? Dad, you shoulda told them you were born at night but it wasn't last night!"

After a few minutes of snickering analysis, the doorbell rang. It was Nigel, sheepishly asking if we would mind giving his car a push. This had never happened before, he assured me, but for some reason the Jaguar wouldn't start.

I watched as both of my sons shoved the car out of the driveway. The image is still with me: Nigel popping the clutch to get it going while Irina sat fuming on the passenger side. The second perfect ending came the next day when I sampled the champagne. It was bogus as well, basically a knockoff bottle of alcoholic ginger ale with some extra fizz and a sour aftertaste.

Each time I think about this episode, I remember my father's spot-on assessment. It's the old story: son gets older, father gets smarter. There are still plenty of Irinas and "Lords" around, offering too-good-to-be-true opportunities. It's just too bad that their victims weren't lucky enough to have a father who "didn't know anything" when they were young.

— David Shifrin



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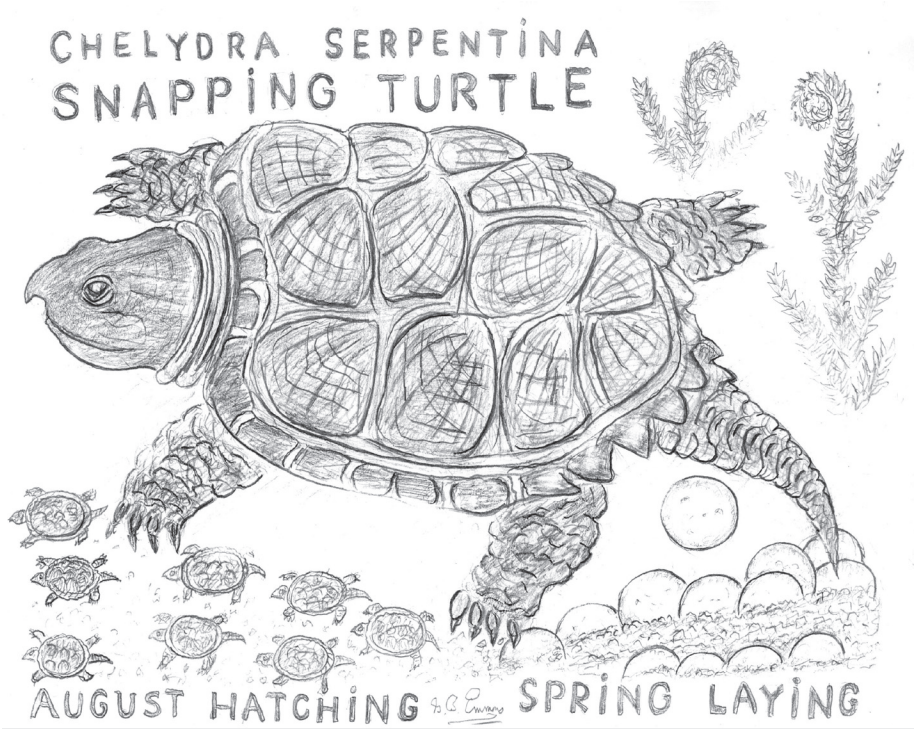
Summer Solstice for Snapping Turtles



The snapping turtle is one of the oldest living species on Earth, with origins dating back forty million years, and it is the ancestor of most other turtles. It is also called a mud turtle, spending the winter in the soft bottom of ponds under the ice. It digs itself in backwards with its tail and is able to go for months without breathing.

Like other reptiles, it cannot generate heat in its own body and must rely on basking in the sun. And the eggs must be deposited in a warm place so they will incubate and hatch out. So when the summer solstice brings the longest daylight hours, the snapper abandons its underwater haunts to begin an overland journey to where it is comfortable with conditions.

The soon-to-be mother, already impregnated, has the biological capacity to delay fertilization until she feels the time and place is right. Usually the soft sandy soil next to a roadbed is ideal because the road heats up during the day and retains it heat well into the night. The eggs have a sex determination factor based on temperature, which means the sex of the hatchlings depends on temperature at which they are incubated. The mother buries the eggs about a foot under the surface, and a warmer average temperature favors more females hatching out.

Another common site for the nest can be the soft fill below a dam, as at Brewer Pond. All too often hungry predators ravage the nest, as the mother leaves as soon as the last egg is laid. For this reason, turtles will go long distances to find just the right secret location and return each year if not disturbed. Right after hatching, baby turtles, at this stage the size of a quarter, immediately march off toward the nearest water, possibly in the path of the mother, who is never around when this happens, even though shown in my drawing for convenience of one illustration.

There is some belief that the hatchlings become imprinted with the site during the ninety days they are developing and may someday return there themselves to close the circle of generational reproduction. At the sun sign of solar solstice in the heavens, a turtle that has spent the winter in the mud under the ice is somehow able to connect with the forces of heaven and earth to perpetuate the species.

— George B. Emmons

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Who's to Blame?

To the Editor:

We are, we believe, careful stewards of our densely wooded, hilly lakeside property, to which we have added dozens of trees, shrubs, and woodland plants such as trillium and orchids. We certainly agree that the cutting on the Levkoff property damaged the landscape in a major way. However, we strongly disagree with the vilification of the Levkoffs and the proposal to levy penalties on them.

Let us offer an analogy. If a parent placed his child in the care of a doctor, who instructed a nurse to give a drug and a mistake was made and the child died, the parent would not be prosecuted for murder, manslaughter, or even negligence. It would be different if he had placed his child in the care of a faith healer or a witch doctor.

The Levkoffs placed responsibility for the implementation of an approved plan in the hands of an experienced and qualified professional. Somewhere down the chain from there a mistake was made. They had no intention of violating the terms of the approval. They were not involved in the instructions given to the person(s) making the cut.

Although it was not their fault that the damage was done, they do, of course, accept responsibility for remediation. They have hired one of the preeminent landscape designers in the Tri-State area, who in turn has brought in a highly qualified horticulturalist to create a remediation plan which has taken into account the reports prepared by New England Environmental, Inc., and the Natural Heritage Program. And they have expressed their openness to modifications and improvements to that plan following the upcoming site visit by the Conservation Commission.

To lay additional penalties on them seems to us to blame the "parent" rather than the "medical personnel" and is fundamentally unfair. And what is even more unfair—and very much alien to the community values we have come to love about Monterey over the last thirteen years – is to treat the Levkoffs as though they were the perpetrators of a heinous crime. We hope Monterey can welcome this family as well-intentioned neighbors, as we intend to do.

— Pam & BJ Johnson

"When the Welcome Wagon Drove Away"

To the Editor:

We were drawn to the Berkshires for its beauty—culture—and the spirit of the area … and two years ago purchased property on Lake Garfield in Monterey.

We took a year and a half to create our 'plan' for the property. We hired reliable and well-known local architects, builders, engineers, as well as landscape architects and contractors. Through them we obtained the proper permits.

The preliminary work commenced in February, with some planned tree cutting contemplated in our Orders of Condition. The landscape contractor neglected to follow our Orders of Condition, and failed to have the requisite site visit with the Conservation Commission. He (tragically) proceeded to fell many more 'sapling' trees than he should have. The Conservation Commission halted our work, and we have all been attempting to arrive at an approved mitigation plan.

We have acknowledged our responsibility to cure, and have publicly apologized for our contractor's grievous oversight … And this is where the Welcome Wagon drove away.

Newspapers have libeled us by printing erroneous photographs of the "before" and "after" locations.

We have been labeled as pariahs for "intentionally cutting" this 'sapling area.'

We have been accused by selectmen of being devious interlopers with no concern for 'your' environment.

We have been vilified in a letter to the Conservation Commission, sent from an abutter, claiming that he "believes there is sufficient evidence to find that the clear cutting … on the property was willful and not the result of error."

On what grounds do the residents of the community have the right to accept the "belief" of a 'neighbor' over the word of the respected local professionals on our project!

Why is everyone concerned about perception? Why is there such pressure from certain villagers to attach a punitive dollar penalty to our enforcement order? Punitive damages are levied due to an individual performing a "malicious" act. By all accounts—even now admitted in the Conservation Committee—it has been stated that this tragedy was a (terrible) error in judgment and communication by a contractor—not a "willful cutting."

Building our dream house in the Berkshires has become a nightmare … and we wonder where the Welcome Wagon is parked.

— Susan & Steven Levkoff

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Remenbering Carl Champigny

Carl E. Champigny, 79, of 17 River Road, Monterey, died Monday, May 25, 2009, at Fairview Commons Nursing and Rehab Center.

Born in Sherbrook, Quebec, Canada, on June 7, 1929, son of Eugene and Mabel Hayes Champigny, he attended grammar school in Sandisfield, attended the former Searles High School, and graduated from Mercier Music School in New York City.

During the Korean War he proudly served his country in the Army.

Mr. Champigny was the head mechanic for the Highway Department of the Commonwealth of Massachusetts, working out of the Lenox Building. He was a former highway superintendent for the Town of Monterey, a member of the Monterey Fire Department and Monterey Police Department, a Civil Defense Director for the Town of Monterey, and a member of the Great Barrington Camera Club and the Berkshire Corvette Club.

His interests included cars and photography.

He leaves his wife, the former Norma Funk, whom he married September 3, 1955, in St Peter's Church; one daughter, Karen J. Hutson, and her husband, Dean, of Monterey; one brother, Earl Champigny, of Monterey; a half brother, Orville Vosberg of South Egremont; two sisters, Leona Chamberlin and June Tryon, both of Monterey; and one grandson, Kyle J. Hutson.

Expressions of sympathy in Carl's memory may be made to the Berkshire Humane Society or to the Monterey Fire Department, both in care of Birches-Roy Funeral Home, 33 South Street, Great Barrington, MA 01230. Condolences may be made at birchesroyfh.com.

Remembering Eleanor Knoblock

Eleanor Knoblock was born on or about November 28, 1913. She was found in a hallway of an apartment building in Brooklyn, New York. She died on December 16, 2008, in Hanover New Hampshire.

Eleanor lived in Monterey as a summer resident from 1945 to 1999. She enjoyed bass fishing on Lake Garfield. When she would catch a large largemouth bass someone would always ask her where she got it. Her answer with a laugh would be, "Why in the lake of course."

Eleanor married her husband, Ken, in 1932, and they lived in Wantagh, New York. They discovered Monterey and rented a cottage on Bracken Brae Farm. Even after Ken's death she continued to come here each summer. As the children grew and married, they too brought their families here. For all 54 years they stayed in the same cottage on Lake Garfield.

After Ken's death, Eleanor was left to raise three children, a time when few mothers worked. She found a job at Hofstra University, first in the library, and then worked her way up to administration in the education department until mandatory retirement. She moved to New Hampshire in 1999 to be nearer her oldest daughter.

June Programs at Sandisfield Arts Center

The Sandisfield Arts Center will present a variety of programs during June.

Lew Scheffey of Monterey will exhibit in the Sandisfield Arts Center gallery from June 6–28. His works are principally landscapes, *en plein air*, painted around the world during his long, productive life. Many of his paintings were inspired by the Berkshires and the Shawangunk Mountains in New York State. The opening reception is Saturday, June 6, from 4 to 6 p.m. Admission is free.

On Saturday, June 13, Betsy Politan teaches the Alexander Technique, a unique and gentle hands-on approach to body movement. Trained in Yoga, meditation and the healing arts, Betsy has taught in India, Japan, Korea, and the U.S. The cost of the workshop is $15. Call 413-258-2820 to sign up.

The Castle Hill Theatre Company returns to Sandisfield on Saturday, June 20, presenting a highly imaginative production of Rudyard Kipling's *Just So Stories*. Full of color, humor, and fanciful explanations of why the world is the way it is, this is the perfect family outing. The evening starts at 6 p.m. with an ice-cream social, followed by the performance at 7 p.m. Admission is $10 per person, with children under 14 admitted free. Ice cream cones are $3.

For information visit www.sandisfieldartscenter.org or call 413-258-4100.

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Public Meeting on Broadband Access June 19

The Massachusetts Broadband Initiative (MBI), WesternMA Connect, and state legislators Sen. Rosenberg, Sen. Downing, Rep. Kulik, Rep. Pignatelli, and Rep. Guyer are inviting the public to attend a community meeting about expanding broadband access in Western Massachusetts on Friday, June 19, from 3–4:30 p.m. at the Berkshire South Regional Community Center in Great Barrington. For more information, go to http://www.pioneervalleyconnect.org/ConnectEvents.html.

Monterey Personal Notes

Congratulations to **Gabriella Makuc**, who won first place in her age category (14) at the Westfield State College Young Artists Piano Competition on May 2. She performed variations on "God Save the King" by Beethoven and "Toccata" by Khachaturian. Gabriella, daughter of Mary and Mark Makuc of Main Road, studies piano with Jean Stackhouse through the Berkshire Music School. She formerly studied with the late Robert Neidig of New Marlborough and with her Aunt Mari Enoch, her first teacher, beginning at age five. The family thanks all who have supported her.

Congratulations to **Jonah Carlson**, a freshman at Monument Mountain Regional High School, who was a winner in the Foreign Language Teachers' Academic Alliance of Berkshire Country Poetry Recitation Contest in April. He recited "Voyelles" by Rimbaud, securing first place in French One. Jonah, fourteen, is the son of Robert Carlson and Franny Huberman of Hupi Road.

And congratulations to **Marta (Makuc) and Gabriel Starczewski** on the birth of their daughter **Bernadette Anne** on March 31, 2009, an auspicious date.

The News *welcomes personal notes from readers. Please send the information to montnews@localnet.com or drop it off in the drop box on the loading dock at the Monterey General Store.*

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Calendar

Every Monday (exc. holidays): Select Board meeting, 4 p.m., Town Hall.

Saturday, June 6:

Auction of Town-owned land, 11 a.m., Monterey Firehouse. See p. 9.

Friends of Lake Garfield meeting, 9:30 a.m., Monterey Firehouse. See p. 13.

Program by Linda Meyer on Antique Clothing of Bidwell House, 10 a.m., 100 Bidwell House Museum, Art School Road. Members $10, nonmembers $15. See p. 6.

Otis Cultural Council annual tag sale, 9 a.m.– 3 p.m., Otis Ridge Ski parking lot (Rte. 23).

Thursday, June 11:

Workshop on "Understanding our economy and opportunities under the American Financial Recovery Act," with Terry Webb and State Rep. Smitty Pignatelli, 7 p.m., Monterey General Store. See p. 10.

Free Blood Pressure Clinic, Town Hall Meeting Room, 2–3 p.m.

Saturday, June 13:

Free documentary film, *Salt of the Earth*, Meetinghouse basement. See p. 13.

Town of Otis Flag Raising Ceremony to raise new Town Flag, 1 p.m., Otis Town Hall. Reception follows.

Alexander Technique body movement with Betsy Politan, Sandisfield Arts Center, $15. See p. 29.

Saturday, June 13, Sunday, June 14: Free admission for Berkshire Co. residents at Hancock Shaker Village, Route 20, Pittsfield, 10 a.m.–5 p.m. see p. 15.

Tuesday, June 16: CHP Free Health Screening, Community Health Program, 10 a.m.–noon, Town Hall.

Wednesday, June 17: Community Potluck Dinner, 6 p.m. Meetinghouse Fellowship Hall. Program will be "Stories that Endure" by authors Gerald and Loretta Hausman. See p. 10.

Friday, June 19: Public meeting with state legislators on broadband access, 3–4:30 p.m., Berkshire South Regional Center, Great Barrington. See p. 30.

Saturday, June 20:

Lecture by historian John Demos on "The Heathen School," 10 a.m., Bidwell House Museum. See p. 15.

Friends of the Monterey Library meeting, 6:30 p.m., Library. See p. 9.

Castle Hill Theatre Company, 7 p.m., Sandisfield Arts Center. $10, children free. See p. 29.

Monday, June 22: Poetry Recital by Monterey School children, 7 p.m., Monterey Meetinghouse. See p. 11.

Saturday, June 27: Ben Luxon and Simon Winchester present Victorian Era in words and music, 8 p.m., Sandisfield Arts Center. $20. See p. 23.

Monday, June 29: Reading group organizational meeting, 7 p.m., Library.

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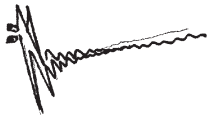
The Observer
April 25–May 25

High temp. (4/27, 28)	88°
Low temp. (5/19)	29°
Avg. high temp.	68.1°
Avg. low temp.	42.1°
Avg. temp.	55.1°
Total rainfall	4.46 in.

Rainfall occurred on 13 days.



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Contributions from local artists this month:
Rachel Arnow, p. 16; Maureen Banner, pp. 10, 19, 23, 28;
George Emmons, p. 27; Bonner McAllester, p. 20;
Glynis Oliver, pp. 21, 31; Leah Yates Wisegal, p. 4.

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